

A Michigan Department of Transportation study showed the department needed to establish a long-term strategic plan for dealing with the state's aging roads and bridges – especially in high volume urban and commercial areas. In addition to the study findings, the motoring public also began to demand more road and bridge improvements.

MDOT established statewide strategies to have 95 percent of our freeways and 85 percent of non-freeways in good condition by 2007. MDOT also established a similar goal for bridges, with a completion date of 2008. MDOT engineers determined that the most efficient and cost-effective way to reach this goal would be to develop a corridor approach. This would allow road and bridge projects to be grouped together for work during the same construction season. This reduces the inconvenience to motorists and residents while saving time and taxpayer dollars.

The development of a corridor plan requires input from various MDOT bureaus and divisions, as well as local government agencies. With local agreements in place, MDOT can close freeways and shorten the construction time, thus improving customer and motorist satisfaction. Additionally, the corridor approach offers a winning strategy for MDOT customers, local governments and the department. For that reason, MDOT has taken a corridor improvement approach wherever feasible, combining freeway construction and repair, bridge work, safety improvements and local road work.

Some projects that have been completed or are underway using the corridor approach include M-10 (Lodge Freeway), M-39 (Southfield Freeway), and I-94 (Ford Freeway) in Metro Detroit, I-496 in Lansing, and US-131 in Metro Grand Rapids.

The end result has been very successful and is generally met with positive comments from our customers – the motorists of Michigan. While drivers often must contend with more work zones in a single year along a particular corridor, they seem to prefer this to having work crews return to the same corridor several years in a row.

The corridor approach also has allowed MDOT to:

- Improve our design process;
- Conduct corridor planning with total improvements in mind;
- Coordinate local work and encourage local participation in aesthetic work;
- Combine projects in same locations, fostering state and local partnerships;
- Make capacity improvements while building upon existing resources;
- Increase enhancement projects within local communities;
- Continue road and bridge preservation;
- Improve safety and encourage drivers to become safer road users;
- Increase funding planning opportunities, thus enabling public and private participation;
- Reduce motorist inconvenience on the same freeway year after year; and
- Actively encourage public participation through motorist information programs that benefit from easier distribution through targeted audiences.

There will never be enough funding available to address all the transportation needs in the state. However, by using sound management principles, gathering extensive customer feedback,

establishing priorities and wisely investing funds, the department will be able to meet its 2007 goal. At the same time, the department will be able to use this approach to minimize motorist inconvenience while maximizing the return on the investment of tax dollars.